821 "Kengelekezeeeee!" and this exclamation is repeated from one village to another. *Kenge* is the descriptive adverb which means the form of the crescent of the moon. Each "moon," or month, is considered as being a new one, the old one having died, and there were special names for each month of the year (See Part VI).

[841] 856 828 821 852 As soon as the mother of the child has resumed her menses (the menses are called tinwheti, months) and this happens as a rule on the third month after the delivery amongst Thonga women, she takes her garments, washes them, puts on new clothing and then proceeds to the ceremony of the *yandla*. The child must be "given his month." This is done in the following way. The day the new moon appears, the mother takes with her a torch or merely a brand from the fire and the grandmother follows her carrying the child : both go to the ash-heap behind the hut. There the mother throws the burning stick towards the moon and the grandmother flings the child into the air saying : "This is your moon!" (hweti ya ku hi yoleyo) : then she puts the child on to the ashes. The little one cries and rolls over in the dirt on the ash-heap. Then his mother snatches him up (wutla), nurses him, and they go home.

This ceremony, which is certainly a rite of passage, is said to "open the chest of the child" otherwise "his ears would die," he would remain stupid. When a child is not intelligent, it is usual to say to him : You have not been shown your moon! (1)

852 846 854 Therefore the *yandla* means a progress made by the child, the entrance into a new phase of his existence. The fact is emphasised by the three following changes which take place on the day of the yandla : 1) Henceforth his father is allowed to take the child in his arms. Up to that day, this was taboo, as the child being continually with his mother was perhaps polluted by the dangerous blood following the birth ; but now she has washed her clothing and has been purified by the reappearance of the menses ; so the danger no longer exists. 2) It is now

(1) However the name of the child's month is soon forgotten and is never afterwards recalled. This seems to show that the custom is dying out, as well as the knowledge of the names of the various months.

852 [854] permissible to push him gently by his elbows and 3) to sing him songs to console him (khongota) when he cries. This was taboo before the presentation to the moon.

There is another custom which seems to be confounded sometimes with the yandla. It is also performed for small children and is called : *kulakulisa*. When a friend of the family passes through the village coming from afar, from Johannesburg for instance, he takes the new-born child in his arms, throws him up and says : "Kula-kula-kula, u ya tlhasa Johan." (Grow, grow, grow and reach Johannesburg.) This is a minor custom (nau nyana) ; it is more or less play and is not tabooed like the yandla.

854 278 751 852 After the yandla, a new therapeutic agent is added to the decoction of milombyana, the *biyeketa*. *Ku biyeketa* means : "to put inside an enclosure." Twice a month during the afternoon, when the moon is new and when it is full, the family doctor goes to the kraal of the baby, he lights a fire before the door of the hut and cooks his medicines with water in a pot till they boil. Then he draws the embers to one side of the pot and lays on them a big pill, a *mhula*. The *mhula* is made of fat from an ox paunch or from a goat's paunch mixed with medicinal powder. Then he places a mat on end so as to make a small round enclosure : mother and baby enter it, and he covers them with a piece of cotton cloth. They expose themselves to the steam which comes from the pot and to the smoke which emanates from the mhula. When both have copiously perspired and the emanation has come to an end, the mother tells the doctor to uncover them, and they emerge from the vapour bath. Then the doctor cuts both of them with a razor on the forehead, on the sternum, on the spine between the shoulders, on the elbow, on the wrist, on the knees and introduces a little of his medicinal powder into the small wounds. The pot with the hot decoction is then taken by the doctor behind the hut, the mother accompanying him. She pours a little of the water into his hands : he spits into it, uttering the sound *tsu* (which is the sacramental act in ordinary worship) and throws it on the child. The mother rubs the whole body of the little one with it ; in the meantime the doctor prays to his gods, viz. the spirits of his ancestors. Begining with the formula of invocation which doctors

852 834 751 always use, he says: "Abušayi, akhwari! This is the child! May he grow! May he become a man by means of this medicine of mine! May his perspiration be good; may the impurity go away; may it go to Shiburi, to Nkhabelane! (1) May the child play well, be like his companions. This is not my first attempt! You have given me these drugs; may they protect him against disease so that nobody may say there is no power in them; etc." After this prayer the doctor takes the little child and goes back to the central place of the village. The mother stays and washes her own body with the decoction, praying also to her gods (but without the *tsu*, as this has been uttered by the "master of the drugs").

751 854 177 757 The treatment of the biyeketa is also called "hungulo dja milombo," "the vapour bath for infantile diseases;" it is not a curative, but a preventive; it aims at ascertaining if the child is all right. If he has bad stools (a nga tlambi psinene) the mother will perhaps remember that she has forgotten to enclose him and she will call the doctor in at once. Should he fall sick, the biyeketa will not be performed again but the milombyana will be administered more frequently. However, it is of importance for the growth of the child. To neglect it is taboo! (2)

757 854 As for the cuts, sometimes they are followed by a second vapour bath, as if the doctor wished to cause the medicine contained in the smoke to penetrate through them into the body, in which case he will only "close" them later on by introducing a healing powder into them. Children generally cry when they see the physician... They dread the pain of the cuts. When the mother goes to the doctor's village, she takes with her the wood, the mat and a pot of beer or a fowl in payment. The physician's charge for a biyeketa is sixpence to one shilling or a hen or a pot of beer.

(1) Viz. to the end of the world. These clans are far away to the north, outside the Ronga country.

(2) I hear that the converts generally have not abandoned the biyeketa, but they do not allow the doctor to perform the sacrificial act and to pray to the spirits. Sam Ngwetsa, the children's physician of Rikatla used to pray thus: "O Father of mercy! I pray thee! I do not pray the dead but thee only who art in heaven! Grant us to see this child in good health, standing firm, this little lamb!"

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

5) The tying of the cotton string.

854 When the child "tiyelanyana" viz. "becomes a little firm,"
857 the mother, having to plough her fields and to cook the food, begins to seat him on the sandy soil, after having made a kind of hole of about five inches in depth. We have seen Thonga babies already sitting at the age of two months. But this "dumping" hardly meets all the requirements, and the mother looks for a girl to help her to take care of the baby (wa ku tlanga na ye, to play with him). She puts the child in the charge of an elder sister or a cousin ; a girl of five to ten is quite strong enough for the purpose. I have often admired the patience of these miniature nurses, sometimes not very much bigger than the child they carry, with their very troublesome babies.

852 But very soon the child begins to crawl (kasa) and this is the
715 time when a very striking rite is performed. This rite seems to be practised all over the tribe, but it has more importance in the Northern clans than amongst the Ba-Ronga. I shall here give the description of Viguet, who belonged to the Tsungu clan and had emigrated to the Spelonken. My readers must forgive me if I cannot tell the story with all its details and if I am obliged to write some of them in Latin (1).

851 These are the ipsissima verba of my informant : "This is a
833 great law amongst the Thongas. When a child begins to crawl,
766 even before, the *puri* is tied round his waist. The *puri* is a
842 cotton (2) string. Father and mother fix the day ; if they forget to do so, their parents, (the grandparents) will remind them of the law. They must have sexual intercourse, but in such a way that the mother will not become pregnant, s. n. i. (Annotatio 2)[1]. The mother will have to take in her hands "their filth" (thyaka ra bona) smear the string with it and tie it round the child. It will

(1) A more complete description of this rite and of some others related to the taboos of the Thongas will be found in the Revue d'Ethnographie et de Sociologie, Oct. 1910, Paris.

(2) There are plants of cotton probably subspontaneous in the Low Country of the Transvaal of Delagoa Bay.

1 [See p. 676 IN these categories or IN 116--Analyst.]

851 remain there till it falls to pieces. After this operation the
766 child is "grown up" and three things are allowed which were
833 taboo before :

1) The child, if he dies, can be buried on the hill, in dry soil. Before the *boha puri* he would have been buried in wet soil, near the river, as is customary with twins and children who have cut their upper teeth first.

2) He can participate in the strange purification called *hlamba ndjaka* which takes place after the death of one of the inhabitants of the village (See ceremonies of death).

852 3) The parents can again have conjugal intercourse, though
766 they must avoid conception till the child is weaned. Before this
833 ceremony it was absolutely prohibited, and should they have
821 sinned in this respect and the mother have conceived, they would
842 be very guilty! It is a dangerous taboo! They would have "stolen" the child, stolen it from the law (yiba nawen). The child would not have "entered the law." It would be useless to tie the string round him in order to repair the evil done. Should he live long, should he even become an old man, he will have to be buried in wet soil, otherwise the rain would be prevented from falling.

Amongst the Malulekes and the Hlengwes such children are even burnt after their death. We shall speak later on about the mysterious relation established by the Thongas between these children, their burial, and the rain.

852 Amongst the Ba-Ronga this rite is called *boha nshale* (to tie
854 the cotton) and can be performed in the same way or even more simply by the father (Annotatio 3).[2] Parents, when they have duly tied the string on the little one, are said to have *fuya ñwana*, viz. taken possession of the child.

Amongst them again, another thing is then allowed which was taboo before. The child can be carried on the shoulders without ntehe by the arms alone (hi minkono).

851 It is clear that the tying of the cotton string means the official reception of the child into the family, even into human society. Before that, he was hardly considered as a human being, he was *shilo* (a thing), *khuna* (an incomplete being). Now he is *nkulu*,

2 [See p. 516 in these categories or in 116 - Analyst]

1:Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

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[Information on circumcision will be filed under category 881, Puberty and Initiation --analyst]